

SUBJECT: POST PARTUM SOLDIERS AND THE PHYSICAL FITNESS AND WEIGHT CONTROL PROGRAM

- A. DOD Directive 1308.1 DOD Physical Fitness and Body Fat Program, July 20, 1995
- B. AR 40-501, Standards of Medical Fitness
- C. AR 600-9, Army Weight Control
- D. AR 350-41, Chapter 9, Physical Fitness

1. Female soldiers who meet the Army weight control standards and become pregnant will be exempt from the standards for the duration of the pregnancy plus 6 months following pregnancy termination. Such soldiers, even if exceeding the screening weight for height table or body fat standards of AR 600-9, 10 October 1986, will not be considered overweight and will not be flagged unless some other basis for a flag exists. Such soldiers, if on a promotion list, will be in a promotable status if otherwise qualified. If, after 6 months following pregnancy termination the soldier fails to meet the weight control standards, then she will be enrolled in the Army Weight Control Program (AWCP). A physician will medically clear female soldiers 6 months following pregnancy termination before they are enrolled in the AWCP.

2. A soldier who is currently on the Army Weight Control Program and becomes pregnant will remain flagged for the duration of the pregnancy and for a period of up to six months following pregnancy termination. If she does not meet the weight control standards by the end of the 6 months and she is medically cleared by a physician, she will continue on the Army Weight Control Program. This is not considered a new enrollment, rather a continuation of her previous pre-pregnancy enrollment. When a soldier is continued in the AWCP, the provisions of paragraph 21E(2) and 21G, AR 600-9, do not apply for the period of time in the AWCP prior to continuation. A post partum soldier may be measured per ref C at her own request prior to 6 months, and if she meets the weight control standards, she will be removed from the Army Weight Control Program.

3. Pregnant soldiers who are otherwise qualified for reenlistment, including those with approved waivers who were not in the AWCP prior to pregnancy, may reenlist or extend because such soldiers are not considered to be in the AWCP if their reenlistment date is during the period of pregnancy plus seven months. Pregnant soldiers who are otherwise qualified for reenlistment, including those with approved waivers but who were in the AWCP prior to pregnancy, will be extended for the minimum period that will allow for birth of the child plus seven months. If such a soldier meets the body composition standard of AR 600-9 during or at the end of the term of extension, then the soldier, if still otherwise qualified, will be allowed extension. The authority for extensions for active duty soldiers in this category, which will be cited on DA Form 1695 ("Oath of Extension of Enlistment") is AR 601-280, paragraph 4-9H. The authority for ARNGUS and USAR soldiers, which will be cited on DA Form 4836, is AR 140-111, table 3-1, rule O or NGB 600-200, table 7-1, rule K.

4. Upon diagnosis of pregnancy, the soldier is exempt from the regular physical training (PT) program of the unit and exempt from PT testing as outlined in Chapter 9, AR 350-41 for the duration of the pregnancy and up to 6 months past pregnancy termination.

5. It is recommended that installations offer pregnancy PT programs to assist pregnant and post partum soldiers in maintaining fitness throughout their pregnancy and to assist them in returning to pre-pregnancy fitness levels after pregnancy termination. Exercise programs must follow the guidelines of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologist, and women must be cleared to participate by the physician who confirms the pregnancy or by the nurse/midwife who issued the pregnancy profile (see paragraph 7-9B(2), AR 40-501). If that provider is uncertain as to her pregnancy risk factor, then clearance by an obstetric specialist is mandated.

6. Pregnancy PT programs also provide an ideal time for new expectant mothers to interact with experienced mothers. It provides an opportunity to educate new mothers-to-be on family care plans, parental responsibilities, nutrition, child care, and other topics. Main installations already provide such programs and find that the combination of exercise and education is highly beneficial to pregnant soldiers.

7. Installations interested in starting pregnancy PT programs should contact the installation Fit-to-Win Coordinator, the Army Community Health Nurse, or the Army Physical Fitness School at DSN 835-6381.

8. The HQDA POC for this action is ODCSPER, DAPE-HR-PR, ATTN: LTC Francine Le Doux at DSN 227-2448.